NAXOS

AMERICAN CLASSICS

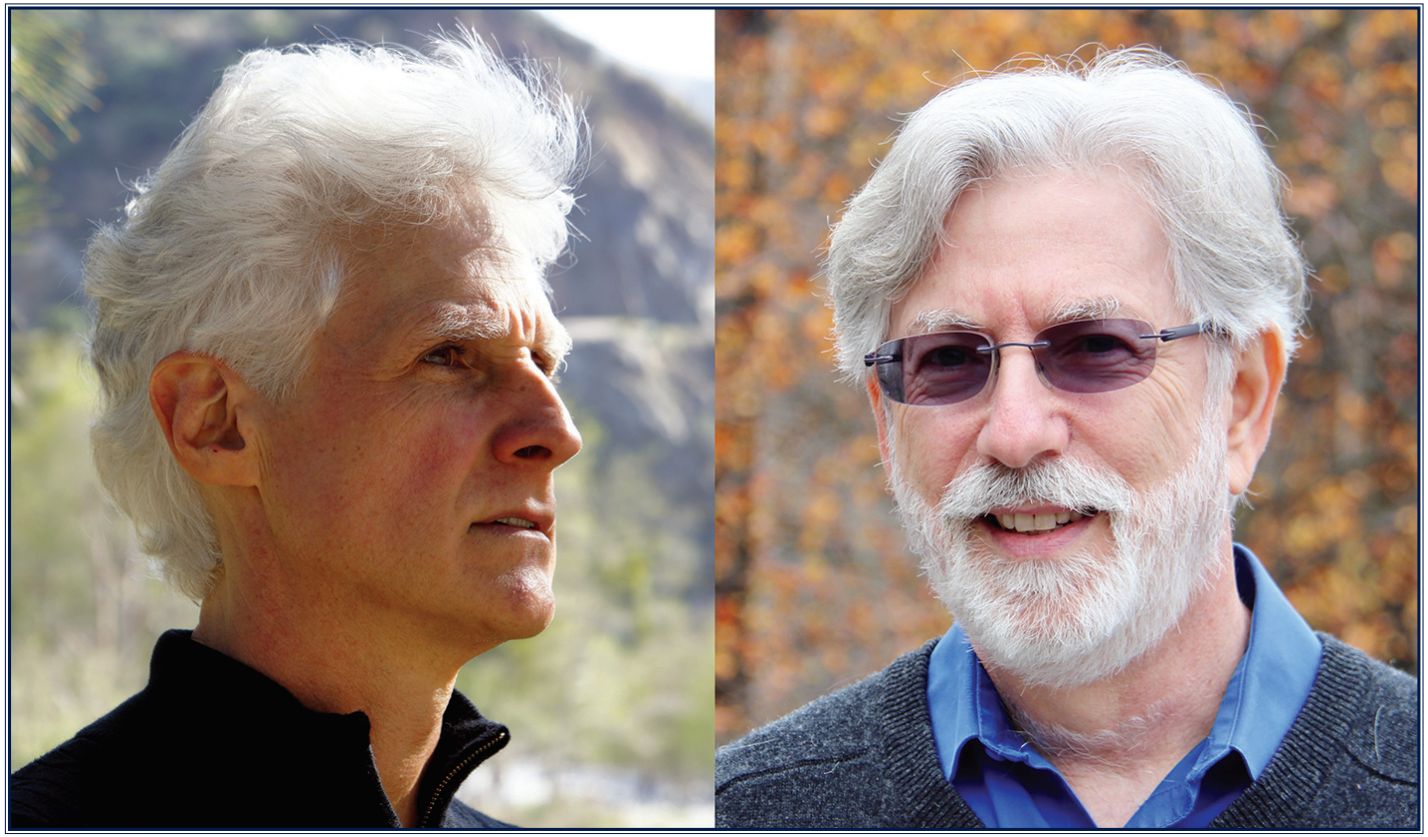
Ian KROUSE

Ronald PEARL

East Meets West

Solo Guitar Works

Robert Trent, Guitar



EAST MEETS WEST

Solo Guitar Works

	Ronald Pearl (b. 1954)	
1	**Impromptu** (2018)	**4:27**
	Ian Krouse (b. 1956)	
	Roderick Usher's "Phantasmion", Op. 25	
	"Grand Sonata quasi una fantasia" (1990, rev. 2009)	**23:42**
2	I. The Haunted Palace	9:12
3	II. Dirge – Lament	6:55
4	III. Impromptu Brilliante – "Quasi Valzer" (On a theme of Von Weber)	7:28
	Ronald Pearl	
5	**My Name is Red** (2007)	**9:59**
	Ian Krouse	
6	**Trois Tableaux d'Andersen, Op. 13 – No. 2. La Petite Fille**	
	aux Allumettes ("The Little Match Girl") (1982)	**3:38**
	Ronald Pearl	
	Four at III (2015)	**9:56**
7	I. Barcarolle	3:09
8	II. Chorale	2:01
9	III. Flight	1:29
10	IV. Night Bells	3:01
	Ian Krouse	
11	**Dror Yikro, Op. 30 ("Hassidic Song")** (1992)	**7:53**

Recorded: 10–11 June 2019 1–5 11 at the Evelyn & Mo Ostin Music Center,
UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, Los Angeles, California and 25–26 July 2022
at the Davis Performance Hall, Radford University, Virginia 6–10, USA
Producer: Ian Krouse
Assistant producer and editor: Cole Mitchell 1 5
Recording engineers: Jorge Velasco 1–5 11, Carl "Allan" Conner 6–10
Editing and mixing engineers: Jorge Velasco 1–5 11, Sergey Parfenov 5, Steve Kaplan 6–10
Mastering engineer: Sergey Parfenov • Studio director: Luis Henao
Publishers: Three Voices 1 5 7–10, Ian Krouse Music 2–4 6, Peermusic 11

Ronald Pearl (b. 1954) • **Ian Krouse** (b. 1956)

East Meets West

The concept of "East Meets West" plays out in this recording in several ways. First, the composers featured on this album live on opposite coasts of the United States: Ian Krouse in Los Angeles, and Ronald Pearl in Providence, Rhode Island. The compositions heard here, Krouse's *Phantasmion*…, a haunting evocation of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*, is decidedly Western inasmuch as Pearl's *My Name is Red* is an evocation of Orhan Pamuk's novel set in the 16th-century Ottoman Empire. Later, the aforementioned musical/geographical relationship is reversed, where Krouse's *Dror Yikro* is based upon a Hebraic cantation, a song of freedom, while Pearl's *Impromptu*, dedicated to guitarist Robert Trent, is unabashedly Western. Krouse's *Little Match Girl* is a sonic revelation of Hans Christian Anderson's short story of the same name. The title of Pearl's *Four at III* is a guitarist inside joke describing four pieces played with a capo at the third fret. Listen to the tracks in any order and experience the connections between East and West.

This project was supported in part by several very generous entities, including: Loyola University Maryland; Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship (OURS) program, Dr. Joseph Wirgau, director – SURF Grant, which enabled a student to gain professional experience described in the album credits; and my awards – Distinguished Creative Scholar (2020) and Dalton Eminent Scholar (2021) of Radford University. Most importantly, the incredible, diverse, creative talents of the two composers featured on this album for encouraging and supporting and creating for this project. And to Ian who oversaw the project and shepherded it so completely. My deep gratitude to all.

Robert Trent

Ronald Pearl (b. 1954)

Ronald Pearl has enjoyed a long and varied career as a performer, composer, and teacher. As a part of a classical guitar duo with Julian Gray, he toured and released recordings to high critical praise. Hailed by *Acoustic Guitar Magazine* as "America's best guitar duo," they actively commissioned, premiered, and recorded many new works for the duo medium. *Guitar Player* magazine praised their "breathtaking dynamic sensitivity," while *Classical Guitar* wrote, "they have convincingly extended the art of the possible so far as the guitar duo is concerned."

As a composer, Pearl's works have been performed, recorded, and broadcast throughout North and South America, Europe, and Asia, including presentations at the Saigon International Guitar Festival, Festival Forfest in the Czech Republic, Peabody Summer Intensive, Long Island Guitar Festival, and LiveWire6 Music Festival. He has been commissioned by the Alturas Duo, Atlantic Guitar Quartet, Quartetto Exsacorde, ADAA Trio, Zane Forshee, Duo Firenze and TrioBio, among many others.

His output includes works for solo and multiple guitars, chamber ensembles, choir, and piano. *My Name is Red*, for solo guitar, has received performances on four continents. *Be Not Afeard: Music from Prospero's Island* – commissioned and recorded by the Atlantic Guitar Quartet – prompted *American Record Guide* to write "This is truly beautiful music", and "This disc is worth acquiring for this work alone." Other recordings include *My Name is Red* by Zane Forshee, *C* by the 1 East Guitar Quartet and *Jacob's Ladder* by the Avanti Guitar Trio.

Ronald Pearl is a Professor Emeritus of Loyola University Maryland where he taught courses in music history, theory, and directed guitar studies.

www.ronaldmpearl.com

Impromptu (2018)

Impromptu was composed for Robert Trent as a part of a large series of pieces titled *Amistades*. These works were intended as small tokens of appreciation to the performers who have been so supportive of my work. The pieces are all short, and more in the nature of an encore, as opposed to a concert piece. However, the use of the piece is left entirely up to the dedicatee – they are free to do with it as they see fit. They are musical thank-you notes.

This piece is a kind of étude in left-hand slurring, especially the kind where the string being slurred has not previously been struck. This creates a rapid movement that calls to mind the kind of "improvisatory" piano pieces of the same name from the 19th century. In writing this for Robert Trent, I was thinking about how he had been such a great champion of *My Name is Red*, performing in many different countries. Given that *My Name is Red* invokes a great deal of left-hand slurring, I thought to continue this trend with this work as well.

My Name is Red (2007)
My Name is Red was composed in 2007. The piece is inspired by the novel of the same name by Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk. One of the many-layered themes the book explores is the intersection of the Islamic world with the West. In this novel that intersection takes place in Venice, and that is where this piece begins, with an allusion to a barcarolle, the characteristic Venetian boat song. The most famous of these is Mendelssohn's *Song Without Words, Op. 30, No. 6*, and the opening section makes reference to this. After a ruminative opening section, the piece moves steadily eastward with increasing intensity, eventually culminating in an extended strumming passage. After this climactic point, the work gradually fades into the distance, ending as quietly as it began.

My Name is Red relies on two interesting devices that contribute to its sound picture: an unusual scordatura – C–G–D–G–B–D – which allows for harmonies not easily available to a guitar in standard tuning, as well as an increased resonance; and the use of interlocking patterns created by an arpeggiated ostinato while simultaneously articulating a melody with left hand slurs.

While the novel takes place in Istanbul, the composition is not intended as a representation of Turkish music, but rather a range of musical influence(s) from the Islamic world.

Four at III (2015)
These four pieces were written after experimenting with capo positions and tunings, and their attendant changes in timbre. After settling on the third fret, these four nocturnes took shape: a movement evoking the lulling quality of the barcarolle, a chorale, a quiet meditation mixing natural notes with harmonics, and a fleet odd-metered sprint. Throughout, the sixth string is retuned between movements, so the full title of the work should be *Four Movements to be Played with a Capo at the Third Fret While Progressively Retuning the Sixth String*; for the sake of simplicity, it was shortened to *Four at III*.

Ronald Pearl

Ian Krouse (b. 1956)
Born in 1956 in Olney, Maryland, composer Ian Krouse has been hailed by *Gramophone* magazine as "one of the most communicative and intriguing young composers on the music scene today." Of his well-known *Bulerías, Soundboard* described his music as "absorbing, brutal, beautiful, and harsh, all at the same time." He is widely known for his pioneering development of the guitar quartet, of which he has composed eleven to date, including the epic *Quartet No. 5 "Labyrinth" (On A Theme of Led Zeppelin)*, most of which have received multiple recordings and are now featured regularly in the touring repertories of the leading groups of our time. Several of his solo guitar works, most notably *Air (In the Irish style)*, *Dror Yikro*, and *Variations On A Moldavian Hora*, have received multiple recordings and are performed regularly by guitarists all over the world.

Though some have described his music as "universalism" or "totalism", the eminent American composer Richard Danielpour has drawn a comparison between Krouse's music and that of the great Hungarian composer, Béla Bartók, in that both composers rely heavily upon folk, popular, and world music influences. Though certainly true in Krouse's case, many of his works also draw much from Renaissance, Baroque and Medieval music.

His most important work is the epic *Armenian Requiem, Op. 66*, scored for four vocal soloists, string quartet, organ, Armenian instruments, children's chorus, choir, and orchestra, which received its premiere to general acclaim on 22 April 2015, at UCLA's Royce Hall. Commissioned by the Lark Musical Society to commemorate the 100th year anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the *Armenian Requiem* is the first ever large-scale concert setting of the traditional Armenian requiem liturgy. The debut recording of the work was released in March 2019 on Naxos (8.559846-47) to considerable acclaim.

In addition to hundreds of performances annually by guitarists and guitar quartets all around the world, his works have been performed or recorded by the Orquesta Escuela Carlos Chávez, (which recently performed and recorded his massive *Second Symphony – Fantasía Federico García Lorca*), Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Seocho Philharmonia (Seoul, Korea), Ukraine Radio and Television Orchestra, Cairo Symphony Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, UCLA Philharmonia, USC Symphony, Mexico City and Pasadena Chamber Orchestras, the Auréole Trio, Dinosaur Annex, 20th Century Consort, Remix, Debussy Trio, Pacific Serenades, Dilijan Ensemble, May Festival Chorus, and Los Angeles Chamber Singers, to name a few.

Throughout his career he has received many awards and grants, including an AT&T American Encores Grant (for the second performance of an orchestral work), opera development grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, and several from the American Composers Forum and Meet the Composer, as well as those from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and the Atlantic Richfield Corporation. He has won the BMI Award and the Gaudeamus Festival Prize, was a semi-finalist in the Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards, and a finalist in both the Barlow Competition and Big Ten Commissioning Project. His works have been recorded and released on the Foghorn, Brain, Chandos, Delos, GHA, GSP, Koch, Lisaddell, Navona, Naxos, RCM, Urtext Digital Classics, and Voces de Iberoamérica labels, among others. He is a Distinguished Professor of music at the Herb Alpert School of Music at the University of California, Los Angeles.

www.iankrouse.com

Roderick Usher's "Phantasmion", Op. 25
"Grand Sonata quasi una fantasia" (1990, rev. 2009)

This release marks the recording premiere of my *Roderick Usher's "Phantasmion", Op. 25 "Grand Sonata quasi una fantasia"* which was written for and premiered by Scott Tennant in Los Angeles in the early 1990s, shortly after it was composed. In 2009, I performed a major overhaul of the work, shortening it considerably, and that is the version that Robert Trent now gives its recording premiere, one that I have awaited for over thirty years! Though still a daunting feat, the work maintains my goal to produce a 'piano' length, ambitious solo sonata for the guitar.

Roderick Usher's "Phantasmion" was the result of one of my earliest ideas: I recall clearly coming under the spell of Edgar Allan Poe sometime in elementary school. I was particularly struck by Poe's account of the mad English guitarist Roderick Usher (*The Fall of the House of Usher*). Having just begun the serious study of the guitar myself, I immediately began improvising the sorts of weird dirges that Poe so vividly describes in his story. Among other things, I tried detuning the guitar at random, and scraping my nails on the strings to aid my quest for the sorts of strange "unheard" harmonies that I imagined, and though this may have produced a bit of spontaneous, blissful microtonal cacophony (!) I never felt that I came even close to the wonderful music that Poe's words conjured up. After all, at that time I was far more interested in The Beatles and had hardly heard a note of Bartók or Stravinsky. And so, nothing came of the project at that time. At least I had the sense to know that this was a task far beyond the technical and artistic capacity of my 13-year-old self. Cut to the future: I am now friends with one of the pre-eminent guitar virtuosos of our time, Scott Tennant. With his encouragement I threw myself back into the eerie world of Poe's bleak mid-19th-century England with a kind of frenzy, and simply allowed myself, once again, to be swept up in Poe's wonderful musical imagery. It was passages like the following that made this such an easy and enjoyable task:

> I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisations of his speaking guitar… I bear painfully in mind a singular perversion and amplification of the last waltz of Von Weber.

The original score was made to appear as if it had been written by Roderick Usher himself, who, as Poe so vividly describes, was a virtuoso guitarist.

Trois Tableaux d'Andersen, Op. 13 –
No. 2. La Petite Fille aux Allumettes
("The Little Match Girl") (1982)

Pre-dating the *Phantasmion* sonata by eight years is my earliest extended work for solo guitar, *Trois Tableaux d'Andersen*. Each of its three movements is a miniature tone-poem inspired by a well-known tale by Hans Christian Andersen.

In the movement represented here, the second, *La Petite Fille aux Allumettes* ("The Little Match Girl)", eerie *pianissimo* tremolos evoke the dying little girl's futile efforts to warm herself with her few remaining matches. At the very end of the piece one can hear the last one flicker, and then suddenly this goes out, leaving nothing but the freezing darkness of the New Year's Eve night. *Trois Tableaux d'Andersen*, though written originally for six-string guitar, is also available in a version for an eight-stringed instrument as used by its dedicatee Agnes Narciso, who premiered the work in Holland in May 1987, and championed the work in the late 1980s and early 1990s to great acclaim.

Dror Yikro, Op. 30 ("Hassidic Song") (1992)
Dror Yikro is my version of a traditional Hassidic song, which is often sung on the Jewish Shabbat. It was commissioned, performed, and recorded by William Kanengiser. Here are the first several verses translated from Hebrew to English. It also exists as a version for strings without violins, released on a Naxos recording by the Seocho Philharmonia under Jong Hoon Bae in 2021 (8.559907).

Dror Yikro

He will proclaim freedom for all his children
And will keep you as the apple of his eye

Pleasant is your name and will not be destroyed
repose and rest on the Sabbath day
repose and rest on the Sabbath day

Seek my sanctuary and my home
Give me a sign of deliverance

Plant a vine in my vineyard
look to my people, hear their laments
look to my people, hear their laments

He will proclaim freedom...

Traditional

Ian Krouse

Robert Trent

Robert Trent has performed internationally playing modern guitar, Renaissance lute, archlute, and historic instruments of the 19th century, in particular the ten-string Scherzer. He has been awarded first prize at numerous international competitions including the Webb National Guitar Competition and the Masterworks Young Artist Competition, and the chamber music prize at the Arturo Toscanini International Competition in period instrumental performance. In addition to solo recitals he regularly appears with fortepianist Pamela Swenson Trent as Duo Firenze, and they have been the recipients of numerous awards, including from the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University, Radford University, and the Virginia Commission for the Arts. He also performs with Marco Battaglia on a 19th-century period guitar built by Gennaro Fabricatore. His discography includes *Barcarolles and Fantasies: 10-stringed guitar* (Soundset Recordings) and *Italian Nocturnes: Early Romantic Music for Guitar and Fortepiano* with Duo Firenze (Dorian Recordings). He is currently a professor of music at Radford University where he is director of the university's Annual International Guitar Festival, and was named Distinguished Creative Scholar (2020) and Dalton Eminent Scholar (2021).

www.roberttrentguitarist.com

Photo: Waggaman Photography

Ronald
PEARL
(b. 1954)

Ian
KROUSE
(b. 1956)

1	**Pearl: Impromptu** (2018)*	4:27
2–4	**Krouse: Roderick Usher's "Phantasmion", Op. 25 "Grand Sonata quasi una fantasia"** (1990, rev. 2009)*	23:42
5	**Pearl: My Name is Red** (2007)	9:59
6	**Krouse: Trois Tableaux d'Andersen, Op. 13 – No. 2. La Petite Fille aux Allumettes ("The Little Match Girl")** (1982)	3:38
7–10	**Pearl: Four at III** (2015)*	9:56
11	**Krouse: Dror Yikro, Op. 30 ("Hassidic Song")** (1992)	7:53

*World Premiere Recording

Robert Trent, Guitar

A detailed track list and full recording and publishing information can be found inside the booklet

Producer: Ian Krouse

Booklet notes: Robert Trent, Ronald Pearl, Ian Krouse

Cover photographs: Ian Krouse by Eryn Krouse, Ronald Pearl by Brigid Hamilton

American Classics

East Meets West **offers a series of geographical and musical connections that bind the music of Ian Krouse ("One of the most communicative young composers on the music scene today" – *Gramophone*) and Ronald Pearl, whose guitar music is performed worldwide. The album includes the first recording in its 2009 revision of Krouse's *Roderick Usher's "Phantasmion"*, as well as the eloquent tone poem, *The Little Match Girl*, and his version of a Hassidic song. Pearl's *My Name is Red* is inspired by Orhan Pamuk's novel and reveals a range of Islamic influences.**

www.naxos.com

Playing Time:
59:41